

# CATTELEYA BLOSSOM BROWN NECROTIC STREAK

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Cattleya blossom brown necrotic streak was first reported in December 1964 by Thornberry and Phillippe (1). They reported that a virus similar to cymbidium mosaic virus was consistently associated with the disease. Their work indicates that this disease may be a complex of two viruses because a virus similar to odontoglossum ringspot virus was also recovered from the affected flower parts. Blossom brown necrotic streak is an infectious disease readily disseminated by cutting instruments. This disease has been reported on cattleya-type orchids in England, Illinois, and Maryland. Recently several plants showing the same symptoms were collected in Florida.

SYMPTOMS. Flowers on infected plants open without any visible symptoms. Brown necrotic streaks become visible a week or so after the flowers open. The necrotic streaks appear first on the midrib or larger veins of the sepals and petals as elongate spots. Spots or streaks on an individual flower may increase in number and size to involve essentially the entire flower. Necrotic areas on some blossoms, however, may remain as isolated brown spots or streaks without noticeable enlargement (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Cattleya gigas "Firmin Lambeau" X Cattleya Bow Bells infected with cattleya blossom brown necrotic streak.

CONTROL. No control has been found for this highly infectious virus disease. Healthy plants may become infected when cut with a knife or other tool contaminated with juice from a brown necrotic streak virus infected plant. Thornberry and Phillippe (1) also state that the delay of symptom expression creates frustration in orchid production and an extremely critical situation in marketing. The immediate monetary loss to growers and dealers who discard defective flowers is only part of the total picture. Continued public disappointment with\_ the quality of orchid blossoms could result in a shift of public interest to other cut flowers.

#### Literature Cited

1. Thornberry, H. H., and Hary Ruth Phillippe. 1964. Orchid disease: cattleya blossom brown necrotic streak. Plant Disease Reporter 48:936-940.